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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2669
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000264

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DEPARTMENT PASS TO AID/OTI (RPORTER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/02/2029
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: CHAVEZ TO PRESIDENT OBAMA: GO (EXPLETIVE) YOURSELF

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ,
FOR REASON 1.4(D)

¶1. (C) Summary: In two mandatory "en cadena" TV broadcasts February 28 and March 1, President Chavez verbally assailed President Obama in response to the recent public release of the U.S. Human Rights Report and the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR). More specifically, Chavez told the American president to "lavar el palto" using a colloquial and extremely vulgar Venezuelan expression that means to "go f--- yourself." Chavez also compared Obama to former President Bush, asking rhetorically whether Bush was "still in charge" in Washington. Despite some suggestions that Chavez would be open to improving bilateral relations, the Venezuelan president appears to be suggesting that improving bilateral relations depends on the USG not criticizing the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (GBRV). End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Chavez went on the offensive against President Obama during a mandatory "en cadena" broadcast February 28 commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the 1989 Caracas riots ("Caracazo"). In response to the recent releases of the annual U.S. Human Rights Report and the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Chavez retorted, "Mr. Obama, worry about your own issues. Go and f--- yourself (vayase a lavar el palto). Don't mess with me. Don't make a mistake and follow the stupid path of the Bush government. Show a little bit of intelligence, don't follow the path of stupidity." He added, "the United States is the first consumer of drugs in the world. How can they not stop the entrance of drugs? Here, the DEA supports narcotrafficking, coup-plotters."

¶3. (SBU) Chavez deployed similar vitriol during the March 1 "Alo, Presidente" broadcast, which was also en cadena. He asserted that, "Yesterday, I had to respond to Obama because they continue abusing us, and so I ask myself, is there a new president in the United States or is Bush still in charge?" Chavez contended that "the United States lacks a leader, (they should) convert Obama into a leader of the (American) people and worry about their hunger, the misery and poverty of the United States, the violence, the drugs, the insanity that has invaded sectors of that society . . . Venezuela is not its problem." Chavez finally asserted that it was US government institutions that were responsible for human rights abuses and riddled with corruption.

¶4. (C) Comment: President's Chavez's most recent personal attacks on President Obama contradict Chavez's post-inauguration rhetorical overtures as well as suggestions by Venezuelan diplomats and pro-Chavez legislators that the GBRV wants to improve bilateral ties over the "medium term." They mirror similar comments that Chavez made regularly about President Bush; in fact, Chavez deployed the same vulgar

phrase last year about President Bush after the USG declared in September 2008 that Venezuela "failed demonstrably" to meet its international counter-narcotics obligations. Nevertheless, Chavez's latest comments indicate that he is perfectly willing to continue vilifying the United States -- and President Obama's administration -- in the face of any perceived criticism. Apparently, for Chavez, a mature and respectful bilateral relationship means one where the USG is unable to make any comment that could be interpreted as a criticism of his Bolivarian revolution. End Comment.
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